

VZCZCXRO2641
RR RUEHPOD
DE RUEHVJ #0444 0981315
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 081315Z APR 09
FM AMEMBASSY SARAJEVO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0017
RUEHPS/AMEMBASSY PRISTINA 0179
RUEHPOD/AMEMBASSY PODGORICA 0058
RUEHVB/AMEMBASSY ZAGREB 0600
RUEHTI/AMEMBASSY TIRANA 0165
RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS 0077
RUEHSF/AMEMBASSY SOFIA 0060
RUEHLJ/AMEMBASSY LJUBLJANA 0107
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 0178
RUEHVI/AMEMBASSY VIENNA 0324
RUEHSQ/AMEMBASSY SKOPJE 0294
RUEHPNH/NVC PORTSMOUTH 0024

UNCLAS SARAJEVO 000444

DEPT FOR CA/EX, CA/FPP, CA/VO, AND EUR/SCE (MIKE FOOKS, DAVID MC GUIRE); DEPT ALSO PASS TO KCC; POSTS FOR FRAUD PREVENTION MANAGERS; VIENNA FOR DHS MARLA BELVEDERE; DEPT ALSO PASS TO DHS SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: KFRD CVIS CMGT CPAS ASEC BK

SUBJECT: SARAJEVO FRAUD UNIT VISITS THE OFFICE OF THE BOSNIAN MUSLIM DIASPORA

¶1. [Summary] FPU recently completed a fraud prevention site visit to the Islamic Community's Governing Council (Rijaset) Office of the Bosniak Diaspora. Our fraud investigator wanted to broaden our contacts with the Rijaset representatives to resolve questions about religious worker (R1) visa cases. We learned that newly appointed imams from Bosnia must have a university degree in theology. [End of Summary]

¶2. After receiving several applications for religious workers that seemed suspect because of the applicants' youth and inexperience, the fraud unit visited the Rijaset. The Rijaset acts as the supreme authority for Bosnian Muslims in Bosnia. It is the only authority that issues decrees for Bosnian imams, certifying them as qualified to work in Bosnian communities in the United States.

¶3. The Rijaset has no legal jurisdiction over any Bosnian Islamic community outside of Bosnia. However, they are considered to be the supreme religious authority for all Bosnian Muslims. As such, they have a broad theological jurisdiction. Upon receiving a request from official representatives of Bosnian Muslims in the United States, the Rijaset will issue a decree only to those who first graduate with a university degree in theology. This rule has been applied to those becoming imams from about 2000 and is also in accordance with the FAM (9 FAM 41.58 N10.1), which states that the religious workers need to have a baccalaureate degree to qualify for the program and work in the U.S. Prior to 2000, religious high schools (madrassas) in Bosnia were authorized to issue diplomas for imams, but they can no longer do so.

¶4. Following this visit we have improved communication with the Rijaset and are now in a better position to evaluate religious worker visa requests from Bosnia and Herzegovina when we receive the DHS approved petitions.

ENGLISH